

REMARKS

Pursuant to the non-final Office Action mailed March 10, 2008, which has been carefully considered, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. To further prosecution of this application, each of the issues raised in the non-final Office Action is addressed herein.

Claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-29, 31-39, and 41-48 are currently pending in this application, of which Claims 1, 9, 15, 25, 33-35, and 39 are independent claims. By this Amendment, Claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 15, 17, 25, 31-35, 39, and 41 have been amended, and Claims 6, 16, 30, and 40 have been cancelled to accept subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. The application as now presented is believed to be in allowable condition.

A. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation that Claims 6-10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30-36, 40, 41, 47, and 48 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, while not acceding to the propriety of any claim rejections over prior art set forth in the Office Action, Applicants have rewritten the claims to accept the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner so as to expedite prosecution of this application towards allowance.

B. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-5, 11-15, 18-22, 25-29, 37-39, and 42-46 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0049741 to Skene et al. These rejections have been rendered moot by the amendments submitted herein. Applicants do not concede that the foregoing rejections are proper, and reserve the right to file one or more related applications directed to the subject matter of the claims prior to the amendments herein. Therefore, it is

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respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1-5, 11-15, 18-22, 25-29, 37-39, and 42-46 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Entry of the amendments to Claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 15, 17, 25, 31-35, 39, and 41; favorable consideration of Claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 15, 17, 25, 31-35, 39, and 41, as amended; favorable reconsideration of Claims 2-6, 10-14, 16, 18-24, 26-30, 36-38, 40, and 42-48; and allowance of pending Claims 1-5, 7-15, 17-29, 31-39, and 41-48 are solicited.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number provided below to discuss any outstanding issues relating to the allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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